(c) what are the reasons for discontinuing the supply of rice abruptly; and

(d) what steps have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

New Foodgrain Procurement Policy

495. SHRI ANANTA SETHI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to introduce a new foodgrain procurement policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof;

(c) whether the consent of the State Government has been taken on the policy; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the State Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) In 1997-98, Government decided to introduce a Scheme of decentralised procurement and distribution of wheat and rice. The salient features of the scheme are:—

(i) State Agency shall procure, store and issue foodgrains for PDS as per the allocation made by the Central Government.

(ii) The Central Government shall work out the subsidy payable based on the differential of economic cost of the State and the Central Issue Price.

(iii) Procurement in excess of PDS requirement can be handed over to the Food Corporation of India.

(c) and (d) The Government of West Bengal adopted this Scheme for rice from 1997-98 Kharif Marketing Season. Government of MP started implementing this Scheme for wheat in 1999-2000 Rabi Marketing Season. Government of UP adopted this Scheme for both wheat and rice during 1999-2000. The other States have not yet adopted this Scheme. The issue

decentralisation of procurement of foodgrains was discussed in the Chief Ministers Conference on 21.5.2001 and in the meeting of the Standing Committee of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of Food Management and Agriculture Exports on 6.7.2001. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, J&K, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat and Assam expressed their inability to adopt the scheme of decentralised procurement due to various reasons such as, lack of funds, infrastructure and trained manpower etc. The States of Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh expressed that the scheme could be adopted after suitable modalities are worked out. It has been decided to have further consultations with the States in this regard.

Agreement with France for production of Radar and Submarine

496. SHRI ABANI ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and France have jointly reached an agreement on the production of radar and submarine;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a high powered Committee has been constituted to look into the various aspects of production of various defence related items;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the extent to which production of radars and submarines jointly would help in strengthening our defence requirements?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (e) A High Powered Committee for defence cooperation exists between India and France. The Committee was established in 1998 primarily to give impetus to development of bilateral defence relations and identify, discuss and review specific areas of cooperation between the Armed Forces and Production & Research Organisation. In its 4th meeting held at New Delhi on 27-28 June, 2001, discussions were held *inter alia* on construction of submarines and collaborative research on radars. No agreement or contract was, however, signed on either of the two issues.